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TACTICS

INFANTRY, ARTILLERY, AAA, AND ARMOR

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A. INFANTRY TACTICS

The tactics given below were taught in 1952. As a rule, they were identical with information in DA Pamphlet 30-75, "Handbook on Soviet Tactics - The Rifle Regiment", published by Department of the Army, dated Aug 53. Only information adding to or differing from data in s given below. 50X1

1. Manuals and Regulations

The infantry tactics manual used in the school was the "Tentative Manual of Field Service Regulations" (Proyekt Polevoge Ustava), issued in 1948 by the Ministry of Armed Forces in USSR. It was about 20 x 15 cm and had a red cover. It was fairly thick, and had 200 - 300 pages. There were no illustrations. The manual dealt with attack, defense, coordination of infantry with artillery and tanks, security, and reconnaissance. Source was taught these tactics on company, battalion, and regimental level.

2. Recent Changes

Source was not familiar with doctrine or tactics employed in WW II and therefore could not compare or state the changes made in doctrine since WW II.

3. Attack

a. Formations

Four basic attack formations were used: main thrust left, main thrust right, attack on wide front (three regiments in line), and breakthrough (three regiments in column).

The formations were used according to the terrain and the disposition of enemy troops. The forces were usually organized in two echelons. The first echelon attacked while the second was held in reserve. Reserves depended on the tactical situation and the decision of the CO, and were held anywhere from 600 m to three kilometers in the rear of the attacking forces.

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Usually a rifle division held one rifle regiment, some divisional artillery, and some armor in reserve. A rifle regiment held one rifle battalion, some artillery, and some armor in reserve. A rifle battalion held one rifle company in reserve, and a rifle company held no reserves.

Unit frontages were the same as given in [redacted] 50X1

50X1 The wedge and inverted wedge formations (see pp 24 and 39, [redacted] were not taught in 1952.

b. Employment of 57-mm AT Guns at Battalion, Regiment, and Division

These guns were decentralized and placed under command of company COs. They were used to fire on MG nests, fortified bunkers, tanks, and firing positions. In assault and penetration into enemy positions, the 57-mm guns were moved with the infantry lines to support the infantry. They did not participate in the pursuit.

c. Employment of 85-mm SP Guns at Regiment

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In attack, the SP guns were under decentralized control. They were used only for direct fire on AT positions and enemy tanks. One SP gun was placed between two tanks to protect them and clear a path for them.

SP guns were never used as divisional or regimental artillery.

d. Employment of AAA MGs and 37-mm AA Guns

AAA MGs and 37-mm AA guns were usually employed with the second echelon to protect battalion, regimental, and divisional OPs. They were never used by themselves or with other supporting weapons to support the advance of ground troops. They were under centralized control of battalion or regimental COs.

e. Employment of the Medium Tank Regiment in a Rifle Division

The tanks of the regiment were decentralized and supported infantry companies or battalions. Four to six tanks and two to three SP guns supported a rifle company, while 10 tanks and five SP guns supported a rifle battalion. They were placed in front of the infantry, and had the same objectives as the infantry. The only mission of the tanks was to initiate a breakthrough in the enemy lines and make a passage for the infantry.

f. Preparation for the Attack

During the buildup for attack, forward assembly areas were three to five kilometers from the enemy MLR. The line of departure was about two kilometers from the enemy MLR. All movements to the line of departure were made at night. Locations and security of other concentration areas were not known to source.

g. Command Posts

CPs were displaced according to the advance of troops.

h. Objectives

Based on the theory that the enemy would use a three-trench system, the following objectives were assigned. A rifle battalion had the immediate objective of capturing and occupying the first three enemy trenches (about one kilometer in depth), and the follow-up objective was to capture enemy artillery positions behind the third trench (about two kilometers in depth). The immediate objective of regiment was the same as the battalion follow-up objective. The follow-up objective of the regiment was to occupy the second (reserve) set of trenches, a depth of about three kilometers from the first hostile trench. Objectives for division and corps were unknown.

After a unit accomplished its immediate and follow-up objective, the troops dug in and brought up supplies in preparation for counterattacks. If there were no counterattacks and the advance could be maintained, then the advance continued to the point of pursuit. When the enemy was routed and the pursuit started, the first echelon rested and the second echelon (reserves) continued the action.

i. Communications

In attack, radio was the main means of communication. Due to the changing situations, there was rarely time to lay telephone lines. Couriers, flares, and semaphore were used at company and battalion level. Telephone lines were laid from higher to lower units, and from right to left in adjacent units. Attached units laid their own lines. Infantry units had radio contact with artillery and armored units. Source could not draw any radio or telephone nets.

Companies and platoons did not have telephone lines, and the company CO gave orders to his platoon leaders through couriers, flares, semaphore, or hand signals.

Source was not sure of communications between air force and assault units. He believed that assault teams spread predetermined colored cloths on the ground to distinguish themselves from the enemy, and that there were communications via radio and rocket flares. Planes could also have prearranged signals such as tipping their wings, banking, etc.

The mortar battery forward observer could direct only the fire of his own unit, and not the fire of other artillery units.

j. Combat Teams

Combat teams, called assault groups (Shtormovyye Gruppy), were composed of a rifle platoon or company reinforced with several tanks, SP and AT guns, light mobile artillery, flamethrowers, and engineer troops, for the reduction of bypassed enemy strong points (see subpar. A 6 c, below). There were also special pursuit groups of riflemen and SMG units in armored personnel carriers, with tanks, but source could not recall details on such combat teams.

4. Defense

a. Position Defense

In defense, the Soviet Army had no reserves comparable to reserves in Western Armies. All units from platoon to corps level were divided into first echelon, which bore the main burden of defense, and second echelon, comparable to reserves. The strength of the first echelon was about twice that of the second echelon.

The disposition given below was carried out to army level.

A rifle company area was 700 - 1000 m. wide and occupied the first two trenches of the defensive zone. The first trench was occupied by two platoons, called first echelon platoons of a first echelon company. The second trench was occupied by the third platoon, called the second echelon platoon of a first echelon company.

Beside this rifle company, another first echelon company was deployed in the same manner, making a battalion width of 1½ to two kilometers. The third trench of the rifle battalion area was occupied by the third rifle company, called the second echelon company of a first echelon battalion. This made a battalion depth of 1½ to two kilometers.

Beside this first echelon rifle battalion, another first echelon rifle battalion was deployed in the same manner, giving a regimental width of three to four kilometers.

Behind the three of four trenches of the first defense positions, which was occupied by the first echelon battalions, there were three of four trenches forming the second defensive position. This position was manned by the third rifle battalion of a first echelon rifle regiment. The regimental depth was three to four kilometers.

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Beside this first echelon regiment, another first echelon rifle regiment was deployed in the same manner, giving a rifle division a width of six to eight kilometers.

In the rear of the first two defensive positions, a third defensive position of three or four trenches was established. This was manned by the third rifle regiment, called the second echelon regiment of the first echelon division. The depth of a first echelon division was 4½ to six kilometers. The three defensive positions, each of three or four trenches, formed the first defensive belt.

Beside this first echelon rifle division, another first echelon rifle division was deployed in the same way, giving a width of 12 - 16 km. for a rifle corps.

A second defensive belt of three defensive positions, each with three or four trenches, was occupied by a third rifle division, giving a rifle corps a depth of eight to 12 km.

The third defensive belt of three defensive positions, each of three or four trenches, was occupied by a third rifle corps, called the second echelon corps of a first echelon army. An army had a width of 24 - 32 km. and a depth of 16 - 20 km, consisting of three defensive belts.

The 82-mm mortars were under control of battalion COs, and 120-mm mortars were under control of regimental COs. Source did not know if final protective fires were prepared. SP guns were not used in defense, but tanks could be dug in and used as artillery. The 57-mm AT guns were between the first and second trench under decentralized control, in support of companies. Source had no further details on their deployment.

Each platoon leader was responsible for the AT defense in his sector. If the AT guns available to him were not sufficient, he called the company CO for additional AT fire. The battalion CO then coordinated AT fire.

The division or regiment provided troops for the security zone.

b. Mobile Defense

Source also learned mobile defense and defense on a wide front.

In a mobile defense, only one or two defensive zones of two or three trenches each were established, depending on the time available. In defense on a wide front, each unit had a frontal width two or three times as large as in positional defense, and had fewer defensive zones.

Source was taught that the organization of mobile defense and defense on a wide front depended on the army CG,

the terrain, and circumstances. No definite widths, depths, and number of trenches or zones were envisaged. He had no further details on mobile defense and defense on a wide front.

5. Delaying or Retrograde Action

Source had no instruction on delaying or retrograde action. He was taught that withdrawals were to be made at night if possible, but could be made at any time.

He believed that a regiment complete with all organic units, or a battalion with additional tanks and artillery, would be left to delay the enemy in a division withdrawal. He had no other information on any aspect of withdrawals or delaying actions.

6. Special Operations

Source had no knowledge of, or training on night or airborne operations. He gave the following information on other special operations.

a. Mountain Warfare

Source heard that there were special mountain divisions, equipped with smaller, lighter mobile artillery and pack animals (donkeys, mules, and mountain ponies). He had no further details on these divisions, and he had no other information on mountain warfare.

b. Fortified Zones

On orders of the division CG, the regimental CO would form a special assault group (Shtormovaya Grupa) of 60 - 100 men commanded by a company CO or platoon leader. Such a group consisted of a platoon to a company of riflemen, reinforced with several tanks, SP and AT guns, light mobile artillery, flamethrowers, and engineer troops. The engineers had mine detectors, dynamite, barbed wire cutters, flamethrowers, and decontamination equipment.

While the mission of troops in an ordinary attack was to advance, a special assault group had a specific mission - to destroy a fortified zone, pillbox, or firing position. Upon completion of the mission, the group returned to the regimental CO.

c. River Crossings

(See p 44, [redacted], "Handbook on Soviet and Satellite Armies", published by Dept of the Army, dated Mar 53.) 50X1

Source did not know how long it took to prepare for a river crossing. The first step was extensive reconnaissance of the terrain, shores, river, and depth of water by the division or regimental CO and reconnaissance, engineer, and staff

officers. Then all units and and equipment designated for the crossing were moved, preferably at night, as close as possible to the line of departure. Before the actual crossing, artillery and planes would destroy all enemy firing positions and troop concentrations with three to six hours of artillery fire and bombing.

All efforts were made to cross the river in the hours of darkness. If this was impossible, a smoke screen was laid by engineers to cover the crossing, using smoke generators. The assault teams crossed the river in anything that would carry them - flotation suits, rafts, pontons, small and large wooden and pneumatic boats, and ferries. Amphibian tanks and light artillery went across with the first wave. The objective was to secure the bridgehead and hold it.

As soon as the bridgehead was established, a ponton bridge of prefabricated parts was put up, and artillery, armor, and troops crossed to increase the depth and width of the bridgehead. Source did not know how big the bridgehead had to be before the bridge was erected.

Crossings intended to establish a bridgehead were on a narrow front, but flank crossings were made for diversion.

All river crossings were supposed to be supported by artillery and planes. The division or regimental CO coordinated aerial support, but source could not give any details of the coordination. Source did not know if armored units were used to supplement artillery fire, but he thought that the amphibian tanks saved their fire until they had crossed the river. He said that these decisions were made by the division or regimental CO according to the requirements of the particular situation.

d. Forests and Swamps

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[redacted] lecture on forest and swamp warfare. He remembered that only light equipment was used in such operations, and that the tactics were to surround the enemy and attack simultaneously from the front, rear, and flanks. If the forests were on high ground, every effort was made to capture the heights. No further details.

7. Infantry Training

The average soldier was supposed to fire three to five rounds from a carbine or five to 10 rounds from an SMG once each month. Source believed that the majority of Soviet EM fired no weapons other than the carbine, SMG, and perhaps LMG. Only men assigned to HMGs, mortars, AT weapons, and artillery fired such weapons. Source thought that most Soviet EM were good marksmen, but he could not give any training details.

Bayonet training in the Soviet Army was part of physical training. Thrusts and calisthenics with the carbine and fixed bayonet were part of the daily PT schedule. Source could give no further details.

## B. ARTILLERY TACTICS

### 1. Doctrine and Command Channels for Artillery

Source knew of no artillery manuals. The infantry tactics manual (see subpar A 1, above) gave some information on coordinated infantry-artillery tactics.

In combat, the next higher command above an artillery division was army or army group. The next higher command above a separate artillery regiment was corps, army, or army group. A rifle regiment received up to an artillery battalion for support. The CO of the rifle regiment or division decided how to attach supporting artillery.

Artillery firing positions were selected by the rifle regiment artillery officer and the artillery battalion CO. The artillery CO designated the firing positions to battery COs. The selection was guided by reconnaissance, but source was not familiar with the reconnaissance methods. Occupation of firing positions was guided by visibility, air protection, easy ammunition supply, and terrain features. The time required to establish a firing position was not known to source.

Soviet artillery had special firing tables for various weather conditions. One gun of a battery or battalion registered the target by having an observer correct the fire until it was on the target. Then all other guns of the battery or battalion were calibrated according to the firing tables. Survey operations were unknown to source.

Source believed that all artillery pieces could be used for direct or indirect fire missions. He had no information on the extent of direct and indirect fire. He was not familiar with harrassing or interdiction fire.

Road marches, cross country moves, displacement of artillery, and countermortar and counterbattery techniques were unknown to source.

Soviet artillery used changing or floating (Kachayushchiye) positions. By moving the pieces as soon as the enemy located a position, they deceived the enemy on the number and location of guns. Dummy batteries (wagon wheels with logs for barrels) and dummy OPs were constructed as targets for enemy artillery and planes.

Source did not know when reinforcing artillery, mortars, and rocket launchers were moved into position areas prior to an attack. Depending on the enemy strength, artillery fired from two to six hours prior to an attack. Before the jump-off, mortars fired with the artillery. Whenever possible, air attack was coordinated with artillery fire, but source knew no details on this.

In the attack, tank guns helped to penetrate enemy lines. In defense, tanks could be dug in and used for direct firing. At no time were tank guns part of the division or regimental artillery or supplementary artillery.

2. Fire Control Procedures

Source knew of no manuals for fire control techniques.

Division, corps, and army group had fire direction centers. Details were unknown to source. The rifle division or regimental CO and artillery officer decided whether or not to fire on a specific target. The battalion and battery COs and the platoon leaders decided how many guns, number of rounds, and what type of ammunition would be used on a target. Usually the target was shelled until it was destroyed.

Firing charts were used to compensate for weather, [illegible] bration, and indirect fire.

In source's opinion, it would take about one minute to bring simultaneous fire of more than a battalion onto a target of opportunity. He based this on the fact that all sectors and zones were zeroed in. Since a target of opportunity would be a direct target, fire could be delivered as soon as the zeroed-in tables were transmitted to the gunners and the adjustments were made on the guns.

Functions of the topography and intelligence platoons in fire control, observation, and survey were unknown to source.

C. AAA AND ARMOR TACTICS

Source had no information on AAA and/or armor tactics, except as given in coordination with infantry and artillery tactics in pars. A and B, above.